ACT 91 — PUPPET SHOW

Due to numerous explosions, the Space Station Alpha is unable to maintain its altitude.

Warning! Warning!

The predicted impact zone is the Nara Prefecture of Japan... A radius of 40 kilometers centered around Kuroga Village...

Estimated weight of the main debris when reaching the surface is around 7 to 16 tons.

50 minutes left until it enters the atmosphere and disintegrates.

Currently, the station is slowly descending towards Earth.

INCLINATION :24
SEMIMAJOR AXIS :XXX
ECCENTRICITY :XXX

YURI-SAN AND THE OTHERS ARE IN THERE!!

The damage will be critical!

W-WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?! YOU'RE GONNA DIE TOO!

2

COME ON, MASARU. LET'S USE OUR TIME LEFT TO HAVE A LITTLE CHAT. WITHOUT ALMENDRA OR THE DOG, I DON'T HAVE ANYONE ELSE TO TALK TO.

NOTHING WRONG WITH ME... I WAS GOING TO DIE SOONER OR LATER ANYWAY.

AHAHAHAH, HOW SPLENDID, MASARU.

OUR FINAL ACT WILL TRULY BE A BOMBASTIC SPECTACLE!

WHICH PART OF THE "NO WAYYY" DIDN'T YOU GET?

STILL GOING ON ABOUT THAT?

TELL ME HOW TO CURE ZONAPHA SYNDROME.

FACELESS, PLEASE... WE STILL HAVE TIME...

THEN, AT LEAST...

CAN YOU TELL ME HOW TO PREVENT THE SPACE STATION FROM FALLING ON KUROGA VILLAGE?

CLENCH

I'M YOUR ENEMY, REMEMBER? DON'T YOU HAVE ANY PRIDE OR IMAGINATION?

AGAIN? "TELL ME THIS, TELL ME THAT." IS THAT ALL YOU CAN DO?

YOU REALLY ARE A WORTHLESS IDIOT, MASARU.

I'M DONE TALKING TO YOU. ALPHA, KEEP HIM COMPANY.

HUMPH.

It's not coming from a single place in particular. The cameras and sensors within the Alpha station have recognized you. I'm communicating via the speakers.

W-WHERE IS THIS VOICE COMING FROM?!

WHA--

Pleased to meet you. I'm Alpha, the interactive computer.

I will provide the answer.

HOW CAN I MAKE YOU FALL IN A SAFE AND UNPOPULATED AREA?!

THEN, TELL ME!

Y-YOU'RE HUGE...

In other words, I'm an automaton who has taken the form of a space station.

By receiving atmospheric influence earlier than expected...

...the Alpha Station can change its impact zone.

I can control my body according to its angle and propulsion time.

The Alpha Station is equipped with an orbit control booster used for debris avoidance maneuver.

AND HOW CAN I DO THAT?!

CAN YOU DO IT, THEN?!

Yes.
I will begin the calculations.
The jet propulsion is also executed by spoken command.

However...

YES!

HUH?

N-NO WAY...

MASTER... WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

IT MEANS THE ROCKETS WE NEED FOR THIS STATION TO FALL IN AN UNPOPULATED AREA... ARE BROKEN.

Due to the recent incident, six of the eight module boosters were destroyed.

And as for the remaning two, one of the orientation actuators is inoperable. As it stands, it's impossible to carry out your desired maneuver.

IS THAT IT?

YEAH.

CLACK CLACK

I'M TRYING TO MAKE THE EXTRAVEHICULAR ROBOTIC ARM MOVE, BUT IT'S UNRESPONSIVE!

APPARENTLY WE NEED TO LIFT THAT UP TO A HIGHER POINT.

ALPHA, I'M GOING OUT IN A SPACESUIT.

DAMN IT, AND IT'S SO CLOSE, TOO...

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE... THERE'S ONLY VACUUM OUTSIDE, WE CAN'T JUST WALK THERE AND LIFT IT UP...

TAP

...!!

It would take three hours for you to fully suit up.

SMACK

That's impossible for someone without any experience of extravehicular activity.

Besides, you cannot wear the space suit by yourself.

CALL ME AN IDIOT ALL YOU WANT, I WANT TO SAVE THE PEOPLE OF KUROGA VILLAGE!!

YOU REALLY ARE AN IDIOT.

EVEN IF YOU'LL END UP DEAD IN 45 MINUTES?

FACE-LESS!

FLOAT

YEAH.

I WANT TO SAVE THEM!

...HMPH.

BRATS LIKE YOU ARE COMPLETELY HOPELESS...

WELL, I HAVE SOME TIME TO KILL BEFORE MY DEATH.

I GUESS I WILL TAG ALONG WITH YOU...

YOU PANICKED AND FORGOT ABOUT A CERTAIN THING THAT YOU CAN USE... IT'S UNBEARABLE TO WATCH.

.....

IT'S TRULY UNBEAR-ABLE...

SOME-THING I CAN USE...?

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. THEY PUT ARLEQUIN'S UPPER HALF ATOP OF JACK'O AND MADE IT GO OUT TO SPACE...

FWOOSH

CARE-FUL.

WOOSH

THE GUIDE HOLES WE'RE USING TO CONTROL THE THREADS WILL KEEP SUCKING AIR OUT.

FWOOSHH

RIGHT!

ALL THE AIR IN THE STATION IS BEING CONCENTRATED IN HERE.

WE WILL REACH THE LIMIT WITHIN A FEW MINUTES. TRY TO HOLD YOUR BODY AGAINST THE AIR FLOW.

OKAY. BUT...

NOW, LET'S GET START-ED.

WOOSH

UNDERSTOOD. IGNITE THE MODULE BOOSTER ONCE IT REACHES AN ANGLE OF 72 DEGREES.

The jet propulsion is planned to begin in eight minutes. Any longer and it will be too late.

YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF CONTROLLING THE LEGS. FOCUS AND PROCEED SLOWLY.

FWP

THERE'S NOTHING TO IT. I'M JUST DOING THIS ON A WHIM.

WHY ARE YOU HELPING ME?

HUHUM, YOU MAKE IT SOUND LIKE I'M STILL UP TO SOMETHING, MASARU.

LET THE UPPER BODY TAKE CARE OF THIS...

CLANG

IF YOU LET GO, THERE'S NO TURNING BACK.

OKAY.

GRAB

WOOZH

AHH!

BE CAREFUL. IT'S DIFFICULT TO KEEP CONTROL OF JACK-O'S MOVEMENTS WHEN YOU USE THE FEET AS HANDS.

RIGHT...

I'LL BE MORE CAREFUL, SORRY...

THIS MUST BE HOW IT FEELS LIKE TO BE AN OLDER BROTHER...

...I WAS JUST THINKING...

HMPH, NOTHING...

W-WHAT IS IT, FACELESS?

MASARU, YOU FEEL JUST LIKE THAT.

HUH?

A LITTLE BROTHER WHO'S ALWAYS RELYING ON HIS OLDER BROTHER, UNABLE TO DO ANYTHING BY HIMSELF...

WEAK, IMMATURE...

TCH... SO WHAT?

HUHUH, THAT'S EXACTLY...

...HOW A LITTLE BROTHER WOULD REPLY.

BUT DESPITE BEING LIKE THAT...

...THAT MAN ALWAYS WAITED FOR HIS LITTLE BROTHER.

FACE-LESS, WE REACHED THE BOOST-ER!

ALRIGHT, HOLD JACK-O'S FOOTING!

LET'S LIFT IT UP.

HM...?

I FEEL LIKE I'VE DONE THIS BEFORE... WITH THAT MAN...

HEY, LET'S GO SEE THE CARNIVAL!

AHH, THAT'S RIGHT...

SOMETHING LIKE THAT DID HAPPEN...

...HUH?

WE'RE IN THE SAME BOAT, MASARU... EVEN IF WE DO THIS, OUR LIVES WERE WASTED...

CREAK-CREAK

IN THE END, YOU AND I ARE THE SAME.

AND YOU ALSO COULDN'T GET YOUR HANDS ON THE WOMAN YOU WANTED MOST.

WHICH MEANS YOU'LL DIE IN VAIN.

WHAT YOU MOST WANTED TO HEAR FROM ME WAS HOW TO CURE ZONAPHA SYNDROME, BUT I'M NOT SHARING IT.

.....

YOU ARE WRONG ABOUT THAT... FACELESS.

WE ARE BOTH MEN WHO HAVE WASTED OUR LIVES, DYING WITHOUT GRASPING WHAT WE WANTED THE MOST.

...THAT I WAS ABLE TO PROTECT HER SMILE.

IT'S BECAUSE I PUT UP WITH IT...

SMILES ARE REALLY FRAGILE...

THEY BREAK SO EASILY AT THE TINIEST THINGS... BUT THIS IS WHAT I BELIEVE...

I CAN STILL SEE THE SMILES OF THE PEOPLE I LOVE IN MY MEMORIES...

...I CAN SAY FOR SURE THAT YOU AND I ARE DIFFERENT, FACELESS...

THAT'S WHY...

EVEN THOUGH I CAN'T BE WITH HER ANYMORE...

...EMPTY-HANDED.

I'M NOT GOING TO LEAVE THIS WORLD...

...WAS SHATTER HER SMILE.

WHAT I DID...

A SWEET ILLUSION...

PUT UP WITH IT? THAT'S JUST BEING COMPLA-CENT...

ALPHA, IGNITE!

BRRUM

BLAM

CRACK

CRACK

THE IGNITION TAKES SIX SECONDS. HOLD IT!

AHH, THERE ARE CRACKS ON THE ROCKET!

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR EVERYTHING, JACK-O-LANTERN...

JACK-O IS...

The impact zone is now the Sea of Japan.

The descent time has changed, entering the atmo-sphere in 6 minutes.

?!

YEAH.

WHEW! WE MANAGED TO PULL IT OFF SOMEHOW!

T-THAT'S WHERE DIAMANTINA STABBED YOU...

FACE-LESS!

HMPH, I TOLD YOU, I HAD TIME TO KILL.

THEN WHY DID YOU STILL HELP ME?

FACELESS, PLEASE! TELL ME HOW TO CURE ZONAPHA SYNDROME!!

Alpha will enter the atmosphere shortly.

GOOOH

PLEASE! DO SOME-THING GOOD SO YOU CAN PASS ON TO HEAVEN!

YOU JUST SAVED KUROGA VILLAGE!

NOW SAVE ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD!!

IF I WENT TO HEAVEN... WE'D JUST MEET UP AGAIN...

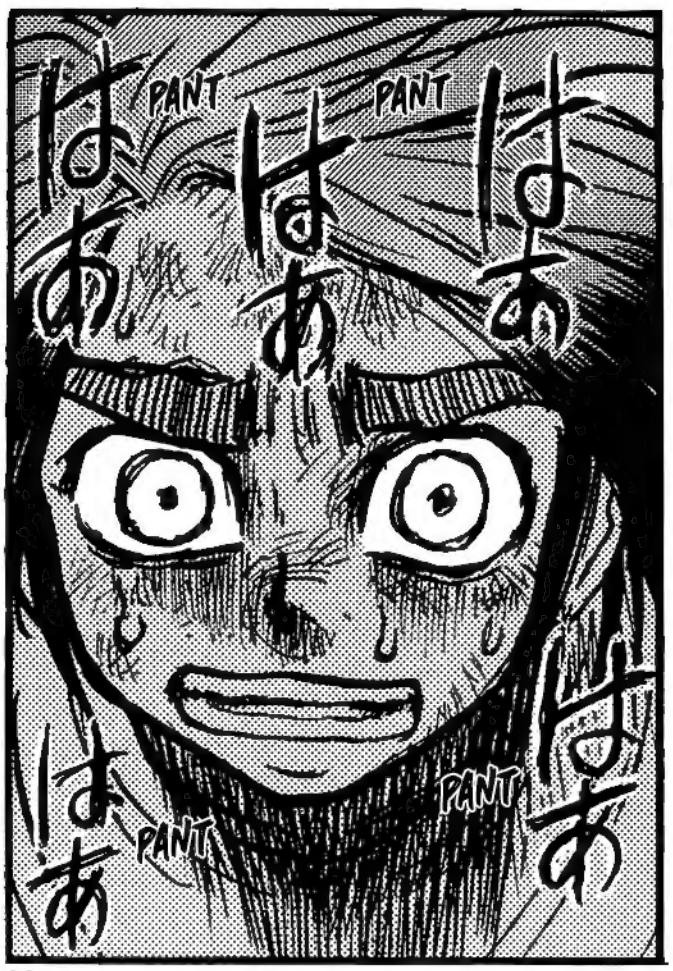
HEAVEN...?

...AND RUN AWAY A SECOND TIME...

I GUESS... I COULD SNATCH HER UP...

AND THEN...

PLEASE, FACE-LESS!!


PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT